

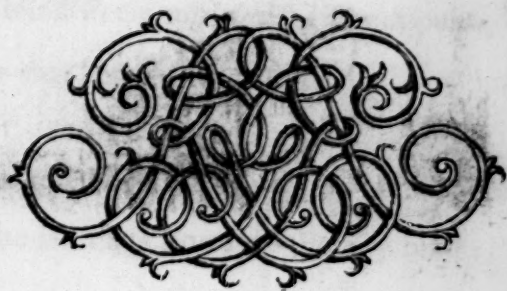
V I R T U E,

A N

E T H I C E P I S T L E.

Virtus omnia in se habet, omnia affunt bona quem penes est Virtus.

PLAUT. Amphitr.



L O N D O N :

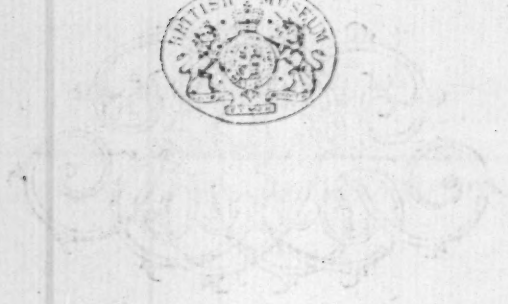
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VOLUME

ETHIOPIA

THE ETHIOPIAN EMPIRE
BY
J. A. S. REYNOLDS



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MUSEUM

V I R T U E,

A N

E T H I C E P I S T L E.

WHAT, you repine that Virtue suffering lies,
While Folly triumphs and obtains the Prize?

Alas, what Prize! Those Joys that bless the Vain,
Unknown to Virtue and her sober Train;
Toys which blind Fortune's idle Whims dispense,
And Pageants that belie Magnificence.

“ BUT Pow'r and Honours sure are glorious Things;
“ And vast the Blessings Fortune's Bounty brings?”

YET Doctors hold, our Manners they debase,
And never boasted yet too much of Grace.
Of Wits and Heroes oft, the Proof is plain,
The Heart they soften, and they turn the Brain.

The

The Soldier, fam'd for many a well fought day,
 Grown warm at length with Plunder and with Pay,
 Seeks a safe Post, and cautiously declines
 The Cannon's Mouth, Attacks, and murd'ring Mines:
 The Patriot, erst with gen'rous Spirit warm,
 Wife to harangue, and zealous to reform;
 His Plan of Freedom with Success pursu'd,
 Corruption aw'd, and Ministers subdu'd:
 In State and Title sinks the Fame he bore,
 And hears th' Applause of Thousands, now no more.

BEDECK your Person with what Pomp you can;
 What swells the *Figure* little helps the Man.
 The gorgeous Drap'ry, with it's stately Flow
 May hide Distortions, but can ne'er bestow
 The manly Grace, and Beauty's sweeter Glow.
 Can Gold or Purple, can the Loom or Mine
 Add brighter Charms to P——e's Form divine?
 In pompous Ornaments, and Robes of Cost
 The fine Proportions are obscur'd or lost.

In

In marble Forms, with Ornament undrest,
 The Grecian Art shews lovely Nature best.
 Gold, Di'monds, Tissue, Ermine, Pearl and Lace;
 What are they all to Virtue's native Grace?

THEN e'en let Folly queen it as she will,
 Her's the proud Trappings, and gay Colours still;
 Pleasure's light Plume, and Fortune's tinsel Glare,
 And all nice Virtue thinks beneath her Care.
 For Her——why leave her, what she prizes best,
 Divine Contentment, and the peaceful Breast;
 The calm, cool Joy, by Heav'n-born Wisdom sought;
 Th' eternal Prospect, and high Reach of Thought;
 Th' expanding Heart, enlarg'd for all Mankind,
 The mild Affection, and the Wish refin'd;
 The gen'rous Love, which all the Bosom fills,
 And vivid Spirit unsubdu'd by Ills;
 The open Aspect; the truth-beaming Eye,
 Not scorning Earth, yet darting to the Sky;

Toils that give Vigour, Suff'rings borne by Choice,
 Griefs that exalt, Afflictions that rejoice ;
 Fame's fairest Wreaths, in honest Triumph worn,
 And Palms gain'd nobly, or refus'd with Scorn.

If this displeases, seek what pleases most ;
 Go swim in Transport, and in Love be lost :
 In Pleasure's Voyage spread the filken Sail,
 Court the calm Seas, and catch the balmy Gale ;
 Haunt the cool Naiad's Grotts, the Dryad's Bow'rs,
 Fair Groves of Fragrance, and fresh Fields of Flow'rs.
 Crown the gay Goblet, deck the glitt'ring Dance
 With all that charms in Italy and France ;
 Till Languor, suff'ring on the Rack of Blifs,
 Confess that Man was never made for this.

For this ! prepost'rous ! with as good a Grace
 A Giant arm'd, a Butterfly might chace :

Or to his Fate in flow'ry Bands be led ;
 Or sink entangled in a Silkworm's Thread.

WITH Pow'rs to flourish thro' eternal Years ;
 With Thoughts to pierce beyond the rolling Spheres,
 You'll own it something wonderful that Man
 Shou'd think and act, as bounded by a Span.

YET see what humble Homage Fortune claims
 From Birth, high Titles and illustrious Names.
 See *Arthur's Knights* their Table fam'd beset,
 Peers, Bubbles, Gamblers, in proud Circle met,
 Heroes at Play, and Worthies---at a Bett.

—At Fortune's Shrine see Legislators bow,
 There pay their late, and there their early Vow ;
 The post of Honour by a Sharper's Side,
 And Greatness glorying in a Gamester's Pride.

WHEN

WHEN the Foe threatens, and renews the Charge,
 Shall Honour sport in Pleasure's gilded Barge;
 And at the Helm, to Indolence resign'd,
 Admire the Streamers dancing on the Wind?
 O burst, ye Britons, the inglorious Bands;
 Lo, Virtue calls; arm, arm your num'rous Hands!
 On the black Vessel, from her Post on high,
 She pours her Thunders, bids her Lightnings fly;
 Recounts past Conquests, kindles fierce Alarms,
 Commands, sollicit, fires the Youth to Arms;
 To gain true Glory by advent'rous Deeds:
 With *Howe* she conquers, or with *Gard'ner* bleeds.
 Now with bold argument divinely strong,
 She flows in Eloquence from *Pollio's* Tongue;
 Or firm, with * *Pratt*, fair Freedom's gen'rous Friend,
 Teaches the Laws their salutary End;
 Pleads Liberty's just Cause without a Fee,
 And bids each worthy Briton dare be free.

* Patron of the *Habeas Corpus* Act which pass'd the House of Commons last Sessions.

Now with high Sense and Zeal for England's Fame,
 She aids our Navy in a † *Grenville's* Name ;
 Cheers the brave Sailor in the doubtful Day,
 Impells thro' Dangers, and insures his Pay.
 With * *Townshend* now She awes invading Hosts,
 And pours our bold Free-Britons round our Coasts ;
 Her Fires rekindling on the martial Field,
 Again Britannia lifts her Spear and Shield ;
 At home to ward the meditated Blow,
 Or drive the distant Battle on the Foe.

You see then, Virtue sometimes has her Day,
 Breaks thro' the Cloud, and fairly comes in Play.
 And doubtless will She ; for, whate'er betide,
 The Chances sometimes are on Virtue's Side.
 For Honour, Honour is her glorious Dow'r,
 Full oft confest with Titles and with Pow'r.
 In Q——y's gracious Heart behold it shine,
 With the mild Lustre of a virtuous Line

† Patron of the Navy Bill.

* Patron of the Militia Bill.

C

Or

Or, in a Patriot Minister, advance
 One Gem of Price beyond the Reach of France.
 Those Chances strength'ning, in the radiant Round
 Of rolling Ages which no Time shall bound,
 By Heaven's high Council, and eternal Laws,
 All strong for Virtue and her sacred Cause,
 Are fixt Necessity; and, soon or late,
 Th' unfading Garland crowns her purer State.

THE Wife thus taught will never court Her lefs,
 Tho' Griefs assail Her, and tho' Suff'rings press.
 E'en these command fair Virtue to the Sight;
 As Shades but strengthen and improve the Light.
 Let Folly's Cheek with Idle Transports glow;
 To Virtue yield the Dignity of Woe,
 That e'en to Tears a Lustre can impart,
 And raise in Melancholy Mood the Heart
 To Strains of Greatness, pleasing to her Ears
 As the full Concert of the tuneful Spheres.

AND yet let Man this Maxim wisely weigh,
 Virtue still suffers for some base Allay.
 The Plant immortal in celestial Mold
 Blooms fair and lovely with ambrosial Gold;
 To Earth transplanted soon grows weak and faint,
 Th' Immortal suff'ring from the mortal Taint.
 See Worth and Meanness, in the human Heart,
 Strive each for Empire, and will each have Part;
 For ever varying the uncertain Scales
 As the base Metal or the pure prevails.
 The Head, tho' able, if the Heart's not nice,
 Now fides with Honour, now with mad Caprice;
 Or low Design, still artful with Disguise,
 In Virtue's Habit oft deceives our Eyes.
 If Niger's Virtue can but force its Way,
 You'll find it's Objects are, high Pow'r and Pay.
 Some Vice well cover'd, or some unknown Whim,
 Oft forms those Characters we most esteem.
 Think you that Half, who plead on Honour's Part,
 Know half the Meanness of their own false Heart?

That

That Spring to other's Eyes with Caution shown,

Is oft no less secreted from our own.

CHILDREN and Fools with eager Eyes pursue

The Sky's false Glories, and believe them true;

And e'en the Wife, with all their Skill and Care,

Will sometimes take a Meteor for a Star.

F I N I S

